Abstract

The domestic compliance mechanism suggests that states abide by international human rights law because international law changes the public’s preferences, thus incentivizing elites to comply with human rights commitments. Yet, experimental findings regarding the extent to which international law affects public support for compliance are unclear. At times, legalization of norms seems to elicit substantial public support for compliance, but at other times, legalization seems to have little effect. This study incorporates the life cycle of international norms to arrive at a more nuanced understanding of the conditions under which international legal commitments generate public support for compliance with human rights norms. I find that the effect of legalization depends on the internalization of the norm itself. When a norm is emerging, legalization garners greater public support. When the norm is internalized, legalization does not always generate greater public support. In a sense, state commitment and norm internalization have substitutable effects on eliciting public support for compliance. I also examine the causal mechanisms through which international law causes greater public support for compliance. Laws of high obligation elicit support by generating concerns over morality and by staking the state’s reputation, regardless of the norm’s life cycle.

---

I would like to thank Beth Simmons, Josh Kertzer, Muhammet Bas, Diana Mutz, Marc Meredith, Seth Soderberg, David Romney, Boram Lee, Anton Strezhnev, and participants of the Harvard International Relations Workshop and the Penn IR-IL Graduate Student Conference for offering helpful critique and advice. I am also grateful for the financial support of the Weatherhead Center for International Affairs and the Institute for Quantitative Social Science. All errors are my own. Harvard IRB Protocol #IRB16-0345
I. Introduction

Can international law cause greater state compliance with human rights norms in the absence of centralized enforcement? If so, how? Due to the decentralized nature of international law, many have questioned why states in anarchy comply with international law and whether international legal commitments can lead to greater compliance with human rights norms. The domestic compliance mechanism looks to domestic politics to suggest one potential mechanism through which international human rights law encourages state compliance. Treaty commitments to human rights norms affect the preferences of domestic constituents thus encouraging elites to abide by codified human rights norms. Constituents may come to view noncompliance as immoral as a result of treaty ratification, or they may fear that other states will no longer be willing to make future agreements if their state were to renege on a treaty and consequently earn a reputation as a noncompliant state. The domestic compliance mechanism suggests that international law affects public opinion in such a way that gives elites a strong incentive to comply with international law even without the traditional mechanisms for compliance that domestic law enjoys. If anarchy is what states make of it, international human rights law is what people make of it.

A handful of studies use survey experiments to examine the domestic politics mechanism by testing whether the existence of an international agreement shifts public support for compliance with human rights norms. While some studies find that international law shifts public attitudes, others do not. In the cases in which international law does shift public attitudes, it is unclear which aspect of international law is causing the shift. This study uses survey experiments in the United States and South Korea to arrive at a more nuanced view of how international law generates public support for compliance with human rights norms. Mainly, this study incorporates the

Chilton (2014a,b), Wallace (2013, 2014a,b), Putnam and Shapiro (2013), Tomz (2008), Kreps and Wallace (2015) are all of the published and unpublished studies of the kind that I am aware of.
life cycle of norms to understand the conditions under which international legal commitments
generate public support for compliance.

I find that when a norm is emerging, laws of high obligation generate greater public support
for compliance than laws of low obligation. When the norm is internalized, stronger state
commitments do not always generate greater public support than weaker commitments. In a
sense, state commitment and norm internalization have substitutable effects on eliciting public
support for compliance. These findings have broader policy implications in that, when a norm
is emerging, human rights advocates and policymakers may generate greater public support for
compliance by ratifying international laws of high obligation that commit the state to observe
the emerging norm, but they should expect laws of low obligation to do little in eliciting greater
public support.

I also find cross-national differences between the U.S. and South Korea that suggest the limits
of international law in certain parts of the world. Unlike in the U.S. where legalization can
inspire even greater support for compliance with an internalized norm, in South Korea stronger
international legal commitments are superfluous if they codify already recognized norms of state
behavior. Such cross-national differences highlight how different regions of the world have varying
conceptions of laws and legal norms, which should be taken into account before generalizing any
finding regarding international law and public opinion. I finally examine the causal mechanisms
through which international law elicits increased public support for compliance in the U.S. Laws
of high obligation elicit support by generating concerns over morality and by staking the state’s
reputation, regardless of the norm’s life cycle.
II. Theoretical and Empirical Foundations

International treaties and interstate agreements comprise the vast majority of international law, but because states must first consent to be bound by such treaties and agreements, international law is often said to lack force. States can also opt to withdraw consent and reverse legal commitments that they have made previously. To the skeptic, states sign international law that they are already predisposed to follow anyway, and international law is merely a reflection of state preferences rather than a tool capable of changing state behavior.² Put differently, the legislative process or the process behind ratifying international law suggests that international law merely has an epiphenomenal effect.³

At the same time, the judicial process of international law is also decentralized since states are their own judge and interpreter of international law. As long as states are sovereign, they can refuse to be taken to court against their will. While international courts may help adjudicate disputes at times, the fact remains that no state is forced to appear before a court. States that commit to compulsory jurisdiction of international tribunals usually do so with the key reservation that they retain the right to withdraw.⁴ Finally, the executive process of international law lacks force since there is no world police monitoring and enforcing compliance with international law.⁵ Although there is an executive branch enforcing compliance with domestic statutes, there is no centralized enforcement body that is analogously tasked with the enforcement of international law.

So why do states comply with international law? Rationalists argue that mutual gains from cooperation ensure self-enforcing compliance in the realm of international trade law and the

²Downs, Rocke and Barsoom (1996); von Stein (2005)
³Tomz (2008)
⁴For instance, the United States exercised a similar reservation at the International Court of Justice in the infamous Nicaragua case in 1984 (Tomz, 2008).
⁵Downs, Rocke and Barsoom (1996)
laws of war. However, such a mechanism does not adequately explain compliance with human rights law. Just because one state does not comply with the stipulations of a human rights treaty does not incentivize another state to renege on its commitment to human rights in order to punish the noncompliant state. There are no mutual gains to be shared or lost with human rights treaties. Scholars such as Xinyuan Dai and Beth Simmons instead focus on domestic sources of compliance. Dai focuses on the distributional consequences of international treaties. Treaties provide domestic constituencies with new information. With the new information, segments of the domestic public can use their electoral leverage to force elites to comply. Meanwhile, according to Simmons’ domestic compliance mechanism, signing a treaty explicitly guaranteeing a human rights norm changes public perception of the human rights norm. Segments of the domestic constituency are subsequently motivated to secure their newly promised right. This shift in attitude among constituents regarding the human rights norm combined with their electoral leverage incentivizes elites to comply with the codified norm. Elites pay an electoral cost for reneging post-ratification because treaties reshape public attitudes regarding international human rights norms. Unfortunately, studies using survey experiments to test whether international law causes respondents to comply with human rights norms enshrined in international law have produced mixed results. Some forms of international law for some norms appear to foster public demand for compliance while others do not.

In order to understand the circumstances under which international law can have an effect on norm compliance, it is imperative that we first establish a definition for norms. Norms are shared ideas and expectations about the appropriate behavior for actors—what actors “ought” to do. The focus of this study is a particular subset of norms, namely international legal norms, or ideas and
expectations about the appropriate behavior for states. There are numerous examples of prominent international legal norms that have become universally recognized over the years such as the prohibition against wars of aggression and territorial aggrandizement. Another widely-accepted legal norm is non-refoulement, the practice that forbids states from rendering asylum seekers to the country in which they will be subject to persecution. As internalized norms, it is abundantly clear what these norms entail. However, at one point in time, these well-established norms were new ideas about how states should behave, and only after many years did these emerging ideas develop into universally recognized legal norms.

The literature on norms outlines a life cycle for norms: emergence, cascade, internalization. During norm emergence, what a particular norm entails is unclear, and norm entrepreneurs attempt to better define the norm and persuade a critical mass of actors to accept the emerging norm. In Martha Finnemore and Kathryn Sikkink’s model, these actors are states. Persuaded states then build towards a tipping point which results in a cascade of states willing to join the new normative regime that carries with it clear ramifications. Finally, norm internalization occurs after the cascade at which point the norm is taken for granted and its meaning no longer subject to debate. When the cascade is complete, the norm is said to have become internalized or established. Harold Koh describes this process of norm internalization as a process in which norms become a part of the state’s internal value system. The defining factor of an internalized norm is a common understanding of what is appropriate. Koh’s process of “social internalization” yields widespread general understanding of what the norm entails by relevant actors, in this case sovereign states. Of course not all norms are able to complete the life cycle as emerging norms may fail to gather the necessary support.
In light of the literature, I argue that state-level internalization of a norm may affect an individual’s likelihood of supporting compliance with an international agreement that enshrines the norm. If states commonly understand what the norm entails, if it clear what type of behavior is expected of states, then the domestic public will perceive the internalized norm in a different light than if the norm were still emerging. That is, the internalization of the norm at the state-level will condition the effect of legal obligation in generating individual support for compliance. Through survey experiments that randomly assign the internalization of a norm at the state-level, as well as the level of state commitment, this study explores if and how norm internalization conditions the effect of state commitment on individual support for compliance.

Before proceeding further, an additional distinction must be made because not all state commitments are created equal, especially not international legal commitments to human rights norms. The most prominent classification of international law employs three dimensions of legalization: obligation, precision, and delegation. Obligation, the focus of this study, is the degree to which states are bound by or committed to a particular law.\footnote{Abbott et al. (2000)} Simply put, while some laws are “hard laws” that use the language of “must,” other “soft laws” use the language of “should.”\footnote{Shelton (1997); Simmons (2010)} Laws of low obligation (i.e. soft laws) entail a weaker commitment, and laws of high obligations (i.e. hard laws) are usually codified in concrete terms and entail a strong commitment. Differences in obligation are expected to have varying effects in altering public opinion.\footnote{Wallace (2014a)} In the broader literature it is commonly presumed that binding international treaties that are high in obligation are generally more effective than nonbinding measures, albeit not specifically by affecting public support for compliance.\footnote{Guzman (2008)}
for compliance with a human rights norm depends on the life cycle of the particular human rights norm at the state-level. That is, a strong state commitment to abide by a legal norm helps elicit public support for compliance with an emerging human rights norm, while a weak commitment will not elicit similar support. At the same time, established human rights norms, because they have been internalized at the state-level by a multitude of states, do not need stronger legal commitments to generate public support for compliance. A weak legal commitment will suffice because individual constituents will recognize that the normative behavior is well-established and will demand compliance regardless of the level of state commitment. The strength of a state’s legal commitment to a human rights norm and the life cycle of that norm will have substitutable effects in fostering public support for compliance.

This conjecture is not new. Koh similarly suggests that studies on compliance with international law are incomplete for overlooking norm internalization. He argues that legalization or what he terms the “horizontal international legal process” between states only provides a partial picture. State-to-state negotiations and ratification of international human rights law are merely a first step. Norm internalization or the “vertical international legal process” is equally important in explaining compliance. A norm must become internalized through “vertical domestication” in which actors, including states, come to recognize the norm as appropriate state behavior in order for there to be full compliance. According to Koh’s conjecture, internalized norms or norms that have completed the vertical legal process do not rely on legal regimes to elicit compliance.

Internalized norms by their very nature of being internalized do not require external sanctions or

---

17 It is important to note that legalization or strong legal commitments can lead to greater norm internalization. That is, a multitude of states making strong legal commitments to observe a norm can lead to a norm cascade in which the meaning of the norm is crystallized and is generally accepted as good practice. Koh (1999) in fact argues that legalization leads to internalization. At the same time, it is possible that internalization also leads to legalization. In that sense, these two concepts could be serially causal. The causal relationship between legalization and internalization offer promising paths for future research, but the focus of this study is to understand the conditional effects of internalization and legalization on public support for compliance.

18 Koh (1999, 1397)

codified law and are essentially self-enforcing. Meanwhile, norms that have not yet begun the vertical legal process—or what I call emerging norms—require legalization or the horizontal legal process for full compliance. Koh’s argument is that legalization leads to norm internalization, which together result in state compliance. Legalization followed by internalization is how norms regarding genocide, war crimes, torture, and religious freedom took root in the U.S.

While not empirically evaluating Koh’s specific claim about the sequential and causal relationship between legalization and norm internalization, I test the degree to which the two are substitutable in eliciting public support for compliance. Drawing from Koh’s theory, I address whether legalization has a conditional effect on public support for compliance based on the degree of norm internalization. I contend that overlooking the life cycle of norms at the state-level and overlooking the level of legal obligation have led to a discrepancy in existing studies on whether stronger international legal commitments can garner increased public support for compliance.

For instance, a few recent studies examining the effect of international human rights law in shifting public opinion show that the level of obligation—usually in the form of explicit codification—is superfluous in shifting public opinion. The mere mention of existing human rights standards, a general appeal to morality, or a weak state commitment to abide by human right standards have the same effect in shifting public opinion as an international law of high obligation that commits a state to observing said standards. According to such studies, laws of high obligation that commit states to abide by human rights are largely redundant in influencing public opinion and thereby unnecessary to induce state compliance from the “bottom-up.” In a study examining airstrikes that could result in the loss of civilian life, general appeals to the norm against such airstrikes result in similar shifts in public opinion as an international law that commits states to refrain from...
from such airstrikes. Varying levels of commitment by a foreign state to an international norm against forced labor do not alter public perceptions of the state. Finally, laws of high and low obligation to international norms against torture do not result in significant differences in public distaste for torture. These studies challenge the common presumption that binding measures are more effective than nonbinding measures. These studies also support the argument that weak legal commitments can be as influential as strong commitments in shifting the preferences of constituents. Consequently, these results potentially undercut the broader literature on legal obligation that stresses the importance of the level of state commitment. The studies suggest that legal obligation, while important, does not differentially affect public support for compliance. Legal obligation may generate greater compliance through other mechanisms, but the domestic compliance mechanism is not one of such mechanisms.

However, other studies find that only strong levels of state commitment to abide by certain human rights norms can create public support for compliance and that weaker commitments cannot elicit similar public support for compliance. Unlike general appeals to human rights and unlike laws of low obligation, only laws of high obligation can shift public opinion and generate public pressure for compliance. For instance, one study finds that the public is swayed towards compliance by an explicit ratification of a human rights treaty concerning the solitary confinement of prisoners but is not similarly swayed by general appeals to the same human rights. That study suggests that the level of obligation does in fact matter in swaying public opinion and that a strong legal commitment has an effect above and beyond that of a weak commitment. Another study on treaty noncompliance and future cooperation arrives at a similar conclusion regarding
the divergent effects of strong and weak legal commitments to human rights. These results are in accord with the previous chorus of scholars who argue for the limitations of nonbinding legal commitments and the importance of laws that entail a high level of obligation.

What is clear from the contrasting findings is that state commitments to human rights do not automatically have a singular effect on public support for compliance and that we need a more nuanced understanding of international legal commitments and human rights norms. When does the level of commitment matter in shifting public support for compliance? If nonbinding legal commitments have the same effect as binding international law in shifting public support, does it matter that states ratify treaties entailing a strong legal commitment as opposed to a weak legal commitment? If only certain norms require binding commitments to generate public support for compliance, which ones and why? Identifying which human rights norms require strong legal commitments has broader policy implications as well. Understanding when strong commitments shift public support for compliance can help focus the efforts of policymakers and human rights advocates hoping to elicit greater public support through the ratification of international human rights treaties.

This study argues that emerging human rights that have yet to reach a tipping point benefit from laws of high obligation in generating public support for compliance. Meanwhile, established human rights that have passed Finnemore and Sikkink’s tipping point or have completed Koh’s vertical international legal process do not necessarily benefit from high obligation. The additional value that a strong state commitment can have in generating domestic public support for compliance depends on the life cycle of the particular human rights norm. Well-established norms are able to generate public support for compliance regardless of whether the state has made a strong or weak commitment to human rights norms. On the other hand, if states have not fully
internalized the norm, the level of commitment is crucial in creating greater public support for compliance with the norm. That is, if the norm is still emerging, it requires laws of high obligation to generate public support for compliance. In sum, divergent findings in the existing literature may be due to the fact that although the right against solitary confinement of prisoners is not well-established, other human rights norms regarding airstrikes, forced labor, and torture are well-established and have passed their respective tipping points such that laws of high obligation are unnecessary. The life cycle of human rights norms matter.

III. Responsibility to Protect [R2P]

In order to test whether the life cycle of norms and the level of state commitment conditionally elicit public support for human rights norms, this study uses an original survey experiment. A single human rights norm, the Responsibility to Protect [R2P], was framed as an emerging norm or an internalized norm. Experimentally manipulating the life cycle of the norm as emerging or internalized across treatment conditions by framing the norm as such, differences in the responses could be attributed to the varying treatment conditions. The key was ensuring that respondents did not reject the treatment and instead accepted the life cycle of the norm as indicated in the treatment condition. If the treatment said a particular norm was emerging, it was expected that respondents treated the norm as in fact emerging. If the treatment said a particular norm was internalized, it was expected that respondents treated the norm as internalized. To meet such expectations, I deliberately selected R2P as the human rights norm to be tested because it is commonly perceived to be at the edge of its tipping point and could be justifiably framed as emerging or internalized.\footnote{Text analysis of open ended responses suggest that respondents did in fact accept their treatment conditions as given.}

In 2001, the International Commission on Intervention and State Sovereignty [ICISS] developed
the concept of R2P to help justify humanitarian interventions in the wake of Rwanda and Srebenica. Challenging the international norm of state sovereignty and the norm of noninterference, R2P has remained a controversial norm since its inception. The driving theme of R2P is “the idea that sovereign states have a responsibility to protect their own citizens from avoidable catastrophe—from mass murder and rape, from starvation—but that when they are unwilling or unable to do so, that responsibility must be borne by the broader community of states.”

In 2004, in light of a growing consensus developing around the norm, the UN’s High-Level Panel on Threats, Challenges and Change noted in its report titled *A More Secure World: Our Shared Responsibility* that “there is a growing acceptance that while sovereign Governments have the primary responsibility to protect their own citizens from such catastrophes, when they are unable or unwilling to do so that responsibility should be taken up by the wider international community...” The norm gained more traction in March 2005 when then UN Secretary-General Kofi Annan issued a report “In Larger Freedom: Towards Development, Security and Human Rights for All,” which highlighted the collective responsibility to protect. In September 2005 a high-level meeting of the General Assembly recognized the responsibility of individual states to protect its population from genocide, war crimes, ethnic cleansing, and crimes against humanity and the responsibility of the international community to step in when necessary. In 2005, at the UN World Summit, over 170 heads of states unanimously adopted the outcome of the high-level meeting of the General Assembly in Resolution 60/1. Together they recognized the need to respond to mass atrocities such as genocides, war crimes, crimes against humanity, and ethnic cleansing, but not more general human rights violations. Regarded by many as the crowning achievement of the 2005 World Summit, R2P could be considered one of the organizing principle for peace and security in

---

33 The Responsibility to Protect (2001)
35 UN (2005)
36 2005 World Summit Outcome (2005)
the UN system and thus a well-established, internalized human rights norm.\textsuperscript{37}

However, none of the aforementioned documents can be regarded as binding international law as defined by Article 38 of the 1946 Statute of the International Court of Justice which sets forth the classic sources of international law\textsuperscript{38} and various ambiguities in the documents reflect continuing disagreements about what R2P entails and whether R2P has reached a norm cascade. To this day, not only is it an open question as to how effective Resolution 60/1 will be in preventing mass atrocities, but it is also unclear what exactly R2P even calls for as an international legal norm. Contrasting conceptions of R2P enjoy support from varying segments of the international order, and its meaning as a normative concept could be considered to still be in flux. Resolution 60/1 adopted at the 2005 World Summit is considered the most conclusive document, but even that Resolution includes substantial ambiguities suggesting that many states have not yet fully internalized the norm. First of all, the Resolution does not specify the means through which states are to exercise their responsibility. Humanitarian assistance, economic assistance, and military engagement are all possible. While many assume R2P justifies and calls for military intervention, former U.S. Ambassador to the UN John Bolton argues that the United States considers R2P a “moral responsibility” of the international community to “use appropriate diplomatic, economic, humanitarian, and other peaceful means...to help protect populations” rather than military means.\textsuperscript{39} Second, the criteria that would trigger foreign intervention was left unspecified. Third, the UN Security Council was to be the only body permitted to authorize intervention, but the Resolution left unclear whether the General Assembly, regional organizations, coalition of states could act if the Security Council failed to act. Fourth, whether R2P as a “responsibility” signifies a positive duty to act is unclear. The Resolution indicated that states will

\textsuperscript{37}Stahn (2007)  
\textsuperscript{38}Statute of the International Court of Justice (1946)  
\textsuperscript{39}Stahn (2007)
be “prepared to take action... on a case-by-case basis,” which cautiously phrases the unwillingness of UN member states to commit to a positive duty to act in light of mass atrocities. The Associate Legal Officer of the International Criminal Court Carsten Stahn writes that,

The concept of responsibility to protect may gradually replace the doctrine of humanitarian intervention in the course of the twenty-first century. However, at present, many of the propositions of this concept remain uncertain from a normative point of view or lack support. Responsibility to protect is thus in many ways still a political catchword rather than a legal norm. Further fine-tuning and commitment by states will be required for it to develop into an organizing principle for international society.

Thus, skeptics of R2P argue that the human rights norm is still emerging and has yet to reach its tipping point for a norm cascade. According to such views, the ambiguities and varying interpretations of the UN Resolution reflect the ongoing struggle to reach a norm cascade. Stahn perhaps summarizes best the debatable state of R2P’s life cycle when he writes that “Some of the features of the concept [R2P] are actually well embedded in contemporary international law, while others are so innovative that it may be premature to speak of a crystallizing practice.”

Taking advantage of the uncertain state of R2P’s internalization, I test whether varying levels of commitment to two different frames of R2P (i.e. R2P as an “emerging” norm or R2P as an “internalized” norm) result in significant differences in domestic support to abide by R2P. Because R2P can be arguably described as an emerging norm or as an internalized norm, I mitigate the possibility of respondents rejecting the two frames through which R2P is presented across the treatment conditions.

IV. Comparative Country Case Selection

The study tests whether varying commitments to two separate frames of R2P result in differences in public support for compliance in both the U.S. and South Korea. The public opinion
literature is dominated by studies that focus exclusively on American public opinion, and many have voiced concerns that this tendency has resulted in an “America-specific” understanding of public opinion and international relations. This concern is especially pronounced in public opinion research on international law because the United States occupies an idiosyncratic role in the international legal order. No other state in the world promotes civil liberties as robustly as the United States does yet has a uniquely strong aversion to international laws guaranteeing essentially the same civil liberties. For example, despite strong domestic statues guaranteeing the rights of children in the United States, the U.S. has yet to ratify the Convention on the Rights of the Child, which guarantees essentially the same rights and has been ratified by every state in the UN with the exception of only two states: the U.S. and Somalia.

Many of the reasons behind America’s disinclination for ratifying international law could in turn cause the U.S. public to react to ratified international law in a unique way that does not reflect how the rest of the world reacts to international law. Moravcsik argues that the United States is geopolitically powerful, which among other reasons, causes the U.S. to be skeptical of ratifying international human rights treaties. Simply put, Moravcsik’s claim is that a state is less likely to support multilateral institutions such as human rights treaties when it possesses strong unilateral bargaining power. Furthermore, the United States also has a decentralized political system that allows small veto groups such as conservative political elites to derail the ratification process. It would not be surprising if factors that contribute to America’s strong aversion to ratifying international human rights law also lead to unique public reactions regarding compliance with international human rights norms post-ratification. The American public may react in an atypical manner because they are fully aware that their own state is the most powerful state in the

---

43 Renshon, Yarhi-Milo and Kertzer (n.d.)
44 Moravcsik (2005)
45 Moravcsik (2005)
world and because a strong contingent of political elites regularly complicate the ratification of international law. For instance, the fact that an international human rights treaty has been ratified may cause Americans to support compliance more so than citizens of other countries because Americans may assume that the particular human rights norm is extraordinarily important to have successfully passed such a high bar for ratification in the U.S. Norms that are important enough to be codified into international law should be complied with. If so, generalizing the findings from a survey of Americans to other states would be premature.

Therefore, including an additional state, South Korea, allows for greater insight into the effect of international human rights law on public opinion in other democratic settings. In many ways, South Korea serves as an ideal foil to the United States for these purposes. First, South Korea does not share the same geopolitical dominance of the United States. South Korea is not even a dominant regional power and as such does not have the unilateral bargaining power that allows states such as the U.S. to forego multilateral agreements. Due to South Korea’s relative weak bargaining position, not to mention the more centralized government, South Korea more frequently ratifies international human rights treaties. The relatively lower bar for ratification in South Korea allows me to test whether the sheer frequency of human rights treaties dilutes the impact of international human rights law in eliciting strong public support for compliance with human rights norms.

Furthermore, while Asian states in general ratify numerous international human rights treaties, these treaties appear to hold little weight in terms of instigating actual changes in state practice upon ratification.\textsuperscript{46} The treaties are often seen as Western conceptions of human rights that require adjustments in both shape and content to become more congruent with existing values and beliefs, which does not always happen.\textsuperscript{47} Some have argued that the Universal Declaration of
Human Rights and other UN documents are treated as “dead letters” in Asia despite having been ratified by the requisite number of countries both in and out of Asia. As an advanced Asian democracy with effective rule of law, South Korea provides an apt comparison to established Western democracies to study the applicability of the domestic compliance mechanism in a region where international human rights law stands on questionable legitimacy. Similar results in South Korea and the U.S. would increase confidence in the study’s overall findings, but differences between the two countries would highlight the need to more frequently conduct studies outside the U.S. in order to develop a deeper understanding of public opinion. Fortunately, South Korea has made significant strides in public opinion research relative to other Asian states in the past few decades allowing for the implementation of cost-efficient surveys.

V. Research Design and Hypotheses

This study uses two survey experiments, one in the United States and one in South Korea. In each experiment, respondents were randomly assigned to one of five treatment groups. Each treatment group first read an identical vignette describing a hypothetical case about an armed separatist group attacking civilians in Indonesia. Each respondent was then assigned to a treatment condition in which the state made no information (control), a weak commitment, or a strong commitment to abide by R2P. A weak commitment entailed the state attending a regional meeting which suggested guidelines for states to protect civilians under R2P. A strong commitment entailed the state signing an international treaty to protect civilians under R2P. For respondents in the active treatment groups (i.e. weak commitment or strong commitment), R2P was then framed as an emerging or internalized human rights norm. The control treatment group did not receive any information about R2P. Respondents in all five treatment groups were then told of the material

48 Laqueur and Rubin (1990: 195)
costs of intervening militarily in Indonesia. Forced to weigh the costs of intervening against the benefits of preventing mass atrocities in Indonesia, each respondent was finally asked if they supported their respective government taking military measures. The outcome was measured on a 7-point likert scale.

On the one hand, if the survey revealed that strong or weak state commitment to R2P resulted in similar shifts in public support for compliance, regardless of whether R2P was framed as emerging or internalized, then the result would challenge the emphasis placed on obligation. On the other hand, if varying levels of commitment to an emerging norm resulted in varying levels of public support but did not result in varying levels of support for an established norm, then the results would further validate the scholarly emphasis placed on obligation. Such a result would simultaneously demonstrate the power of international laws to generate public support for compliance when the norm is less established. Thus, based on my theoretical conjectures suggested by empirical discrepancies found in aforementioned survey experiments in the existing literature, I make the following hypotheses, applicable in both the U.S. and South Korea. The first four hypotheses concern potential differences between each active treatment and the control treatment.

H1: When R2P is framed as an emerging norm, a high level of obligation to R2P will result in higher public support for compliance with R2P than no information.

H2: When R2P is framed as an emerging norm, a low level of obligation to R2P will not result in higher public support for compliance with R2P than no information.

H3: When R2P is framed as an internalized norm, a high level of obligation to R2P will result in higher public support for compliance with R2P than no information.

H4: When R2P is framed as an internalized norm, a low level of obligation to R2P will result in higher public support for compliance with R2P than no information.
It should be made clear that the control treatment of no information leaves ambiguous the existence of the norm and international law. In that sense, the treatment does not represent a strict “no commitment” treatment. In addition to this ambiguity, these comparisons suffer from a multiple testing problem because each active treatment condition varies two key variables relative to the control treatment. This study nonetheless uses such a control treatment in light of the existing literature that relies on equivalent control conditions of no information to attain a baseline measure for comparisons with the active treatment conditions.49,50

Nevertheless, to allay above concerns about multiple testing, the next hypotheses are in regards to differences in support after conditioning on the level of norm internationalization. It contrasts the active treatments, rather than the control treatment. Figure 1 helps demonstrate the hypothesized strength of public support for compliance among the active treatment conditions.

\[ H5: \text{When R2P is framed as an emerging norm, a high level of obligation to R2P will result in higher public support for compliance with R2P than a low level of obligation.} \]

\[ H6: \text{When R2P is framed as an internalized norm, a high level of obligation to R2P will not result in higher public support for compliance with R2P than a low level of obligation.} \]

49 Wallace (2013); Chilton (2014a)
50 The alternative would have been to specify that such a norm does not exist and/or explicitly mention the absence of any international law. Unfortunately, this alternative results in an unrealistic level of deception given the state of R2P. The no information treatment instead offers the most reasonable alternative (Wallace, 2013).
To be clear, I hypothesize that a high level of commitment will result in a statistically significant difference in public support for compliance with an emerging norm while a low level of commitment will be unable to generate public support for the same norm. I also hypothesize that the level of commitment will not matter for internalized norms, which will elicit public support for compliance regardless of the level of state commitment to abide by the norm. I hypothesize that, in terms of generating greater public support, there will be no value-added for enshrining an already internalized norm.

Relevant demographic characteristics were collected for later analysis. These included standard demographic characteristics widely used in the literature such as age, gender, education level, employment status, income, and race.\textsuperscript{51} In addition, I measured political ideology, knowledge level, and political activism using standard questions from the American National Election Studies [ANES]. Other relevant predispositions also drawn from existing studies included levels of cooperative internationalism, militant internationalism, and isolationism.\textsuperscript{52}

\textsuperscript{51}Lee and Prather (2016); Moravcsik (2005)
\textsuperscript{52}Kertzer et al. (2014)
the randomization of the treatment assignment, statistical models involving covariates are not necessary for estimating unbiased treatment effects. As such, the main models in the following analyses do not include the covariates, and models controlling for covariates are included as robustness checks.

The two surveys involved a total of 1,098 American citizens and 1,000 South Korean citizens. The survey of Americans was conducted through Amazon Mechanical Turk [hereafter MTurk] on October 22 and 23, 2016, and the survey of South Koreans was conducted by a professional polling firm Macromill Embrain from November 16 to 22, 2016. Sample characteristics for U.S. respondents and Korean respondents used in this study have been provided in Table ?? and Table ?? in the Appendix, respectively. It should be noted that American MTurk samples are not representative and tend to overrepresent younger, liberal, lower income individuals while underrepresenting Hispanics and African Americans. The U.S. sample used in this survey overrepresent younger individuals and liberals. On the other hand, the South Korean polling firm Macromill Embrain administered the Korean-language version of the survey to a nationally representative sample in South Korea. For Koreans, the survey text was translated to reflect the general tone and wording of the English version of the survey to the greatest extent possible.

VI. Results

Do the level of obligation and the norm’s life cycle affect whether the public will support compliance with a human rights norm? The following table summarizes findings from the U.S. survey using an OLS model with the dependent variable for support already converted from the likert scale to percentage points. As the table makes evident, the three treatment conditions that

---

53Wallace (2013); Mutz and Pemantle (2015)
54Fortunately, studies on MTurk for the most part replicate studies that use nationally representative samples (Berinsky, Huber and Lenz 2012). Interacting the treatment and pre-treatment covariates did not yield significant differences in later analyses.
were hypothesized to have a statistically significant effect compared to the control did have a statistically significant effect in the United States. A high level of commitment to an established norm resulted in a 20.00 percentage point increase in public support for compliance. A low level of commitment to an established norm resulted in a 11.52 percentage point increase in public support for compliance. A high level of commitment to an emerging norm resulted in a 17.34 percentage point increase in public support for compliance. Meanwhile, a low level of commitment to an emerging norm resulted in a statistically insignificant 4.07 percentage point increase in public support for compliance. The results are robust to including pre-treatment covariates. Proportional odds models often used for likert scale responses resulted in the same findings and have been reproduced in the Appendix. In short, I found strong evidence for the first four hypotheses in the United States.
### Table 1: U.S. Survey Results (OLS)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Model 1</th>
<th>Model 2</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Internalized, low obligation</strong></td>
<td>0.115*** (0.027)</td>
<td>0.109*** (0.025)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Internalized, high obligation</strong></td>
<td>0.200*** (0.027)</td>
<td>0.201*** (0.025)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Emerging, low obligation</strong></td>
<td>0.041 (0.028)</td>
<td>0.041 (0.026)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Emerging, high obligation</strong></td>
<td>0.173*** (0.027)</td>
<td>0.171*** (0.025)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>PID</strong></td>
<td>−0.002 (0.006)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Knowledge</strong></td>
<td>−0.068 (0.053)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Political involvement</strong></td>
<td>−0.013* (0.007)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Cooperative internationalism</strong></td>
<td>0.315*** (0.044)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Military internationalism</strong></td>
<td>0.346** (0.039)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Isolationism</strong></td>
<td>−0.130*** (0.040)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Constant</strong></td>
<td>0.367*** (0.019)</td>
<td>0.198*** (0.065)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Observations**: 1,098  
**R²**: 0.066 0.209  
**Adjusted R²**: 0.063 0.195  
**Residual Std. Error**: 0.287 (df = 1093) 0.266 (df = 1078)  
**F Statistic**: 19.380*** (df = 4; 1093) 14.986*** (df = 19; 1078)

*Note:* **p<0.1; **p<0.05; ***p<0.01

The reference group is the no information control treatment group. Not all pre-treatment covariates that were used in estimating the second model have been shown above. Additional pre-treatment covariates not shown above are age, gender, education, employment status, income, and race. PID represents individual respondents’ political leaning with 0 being liberal and 1 being conservative. The dependent variable has been converted to percentage points. 1 signifies 100 percentage points in favor of compliance.
Table 2: U.S. & South Korea Survey Results (OLS)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>U.S. Difference from baseline</th>
<th>South Korea Difference from baseline</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>No information</td>
<td>36.68</td>
<td>42.25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Internalized, low obligation</td>
<td>48.21</td>
<td>50.83</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Internalized, high obligation</td>
<td>56.68</td>
<td>48.42</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Emerging, low obligation</td>
<td>40.75</td>
<td>43.67</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Emerging, high obligation</td>
<td>54.02</td>
<td>48.33</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note: *p<0.1; **p<0.05; ***p<0.01

The table notes baseline support for compliance and average treatment effects from OLS models that do not include pre-treatment covariates.

Figure 2: Average Treatment Effects

Each treatment condition is compared to the control condition, signified by the dotted line. Both plots depict average treatment effects from the OLS models that do not include pre-treatment covariates. The dependent variable has been converted to percentage points. 1 represents 100 percentage points in favor of compliance.

To test the fifth and sixth hypotheses, I ran another OLS model after dropping the control condition to compare responses among the different active treatments. As the following figure shows, a high level of obligation did result in a statistically significant difference, after controlling for the internalization of the norm. This suggests that regardless of the level of internalization, a high level of obligation will result in a statistically significant increase in public support for
compliance with the norm. However, I also find that a high level of obligation to an internalized norm results in stronger public support for compliance with R2P than a low a level of obligation. For U.S. respondents, at least, the level of obligation makes a difference by generating greater public support, even when the norm is already internalized. Therefore, I find support for the fifth hypothesis but do not find support for the sixth hypothesis. The difference in support for compliance between high and low levels obligation are no greater for an emerging norm than for an internalized norm. As before, the results are robust to including covariates and using a proportional odds model.

Figure 3: Marginal Treatment Effects of Obligation

The differences in the average treatment effect between laws of high obligation and laws of low obligation are depicted after conditioning on the norm’s life cycle. Both plots are derived using predictions from OLS models that do not include pre-treatment covariates. The dependent variable has been converted to percentage points. 1 signifies 100 percentage points in favor of compliance.
Table 3: U.S. Survey Results (OLS)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Model 1</th>
<th>Model 2</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>High obligation</td>
<td>0.133***</td>
<td>0.130***</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(0.028)</td>
<td>(0.026)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Internalization</td>
<td>0.075***</td>
<td>0.068**</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(0.028)</td>
<td>(0.026)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>High obli. x Internalization</td>
<td>−0.048</td>
<td>−0.038</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(0.039)</td>
<td>(0.037)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PID</td>
<td>−0.001</td>
<td>(0.006)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Knowledge</td>
<td>−0.100*</td>
<td>(0.060)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Political involvement</td>
<td>−0.015*</td>
<td>(0.008)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cooperative internationalism</td>
<td>0.353***</td>
<td>(0.050)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Military internationalism</td>
<td>0.342***</td>
<td>(0.045)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Isolationism</td>
<td>−0.117**</td>
<td>(0.046)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Constant</td>
<td>0.408***</td>
<td>0.183**</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(0.021)</td>
<td>(0.080)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

|                          | Observations | 879           | 879           |
| R²                       | 0.041        | 0.191         |
| Adjusted R²              | 0.038        | 0.174         |
| Residual Std. Error      | 0.292 (df = 875) | 0.270 (df = 860) |
| F Statistic              | 12.444*** (df = 3; 875) | 11.252*** (df = 18; 860) |

Note: *p<0.1, **p<0.05; ***p<0.01
The control treatment condition has been dropped. The reference group is the emerging norm, low obligation treatment group. Note that significance levels are misleading without taking into account the interaction term and estimating the significance of relevant marginal effects. Not all pre-treatment covariates that were used in estimating the second model have been shown above. Additional pre-treatment covariates not shown above are age, gender, education, employment status, income, and race. PID represents individual respondents’ political leaning with 0 being liberal and 1 being conservative. The dependent variable has been converted to percentage points. 1 signifies 100 percentage points in favor of compliance.
Table 4: U.S. & South Korea Survey Results (OLS)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>U.S.</th>
<th>Difference</th>
<th>South Korea</th>
<th>Difference</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Internalized</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Low obligation</td>
<td>48.21</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>50.83</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>High obligation</td>
<td>56.68</td>
<td>8.47***</td>
<td>48.42</td>
<td>-2.42</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Emerging</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Low obligation</td>
<td>40.75</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>43.67</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>High obligation</td>
<td>54.02</td>
<td>13.27***</td>
<td>48.33</td>
<td>4.67**</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Note: *p<0.1; **p<0.05; ***p<0.01

*The table notes average treatment effects from OLS models that do not include pre-treatment covariates.

The South Korean experiment yielded smaller effect sizes across the active treatment conditions, but nonetheless statistically significant results. First, using an OLS model, the three treatment conditions that were hypothesized to have a statistically significant effect compared to the control condition also had a statistically significant effect in South Korea as the following table shows. This confirms findings from the U.S. survey regarding the first four hypotheses. Specifically, a high level of commitment to an established norm resulted in a 6.17 percentage point increase in public support for compliance compared to the control condition of no information. A low level of commitment to an established norm resulted in an 8.58 percentage point increase in public support for compliance compared to the control treatment. A high level of commitment to an emerging norm resulted in a 6.08 percentage point increase in public support for compliance compared to the control treatment. Meanwhile, a low level of commitment to an emerging norm, which was hypothesized not to have a statistically significant effect, resulted in a 1.42 percentage point increase in public support for compliance, a statistically insignificant effect. As before, the results are robust to including covariates and using a proportional odds model. In sum, I found evidence for all four hypotheses, comparing each active treatment condition to the control condition, from the experiment in South Korea.
Table 5: South Korea Survey Results (OLS)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Model 1</th>
<th>Model 2</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Internalized, low obligation</td>
<td>0.086***</td>
<td>0.071***</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(0.023)</td>
<td>(0.022)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Internalized, high obligation</td>
<td>0.062***</td>
<td>0.071***</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(0.023)</td>
<td>(0.022)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Emerging, low obligation</td>
<td>0.014</td>
<td>0.020</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(0.023)</td>
<td>(0.022)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Emerging, high obligation</td>
<td>0.061***</td>
<td>0.063***</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(0.023)</td>
<td>(0.022)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PID</td>
<td>0.012*</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(0.006)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Knowledge</td>
<td>−0.028</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(0.033)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Political involvement</td>
<td></td>
<td>0.007</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>(0.061)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cooperative internationalism</td>
<td>0.319***</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(0.058)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Military internationalism</td>
<td></td>
<td>0.074*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>(0.040)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Isolationism</td>
<td>0.142***</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(0.021)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Constant</td>
<td>0.422***</td>
<td>−0.067</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(0.016)</td>
<td>(0.056)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Observations</td>
<td>1,000</td>
<td>1,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>R²</td>
<td>0.019</td>
<td>0.148</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Adjusted R²</td>
<td>0.015</td>
<td>0.135</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Residual Std. Error</td>
<td>0.229 (df = 995)</td>
<td>0.215 (df = 984)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>F Statistic</td>
<td>4.927*** (df = 4; 995)</td>
<td>11.374*** (df = 15; 984)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note: *p<0.1; **p<0.05; ***p<0.01

The reference group is the no information control treatment group. Not all pre-treatment covariates that were used in estimating the second model have been shown above. Additional pre-treatment covariates not shown above are age, gender, education, employment status, and income. PID represents individual respondents’ political leaning with 0 being liberal and 1 being conservative. The dependent variable has been converted to percentage points. 1 signifies 100 percentage points in favor of compliance.

However, the effect sizes were much smaller in South Korea, relative to those from the U.S. survey. Running another OLS model without the control treatment in order to compare differences among the active treatment conditions revealed key insights, mainly that the level of obligation
did not always yield a statistically significant treatment effect. The following table shows that, unlike the U.S. survey results, the marginal treatment effect caused by the level of obligation was not always statistically significant. This result suggests that, although high obligation resulted in greater public support compared to the control treatment, the level of obligation–high versus low–did not result in a statistically significant difference when the norm was internalized. This is evident from the figure above. That is, for an internalized norm, the two levels of obligation did not result in a statistically significant difference from each other. This is a key difference between the U.S. and Korean survey results, which warrants further discussion in the next section. Meanwhile for an emerging norm, the level of obligation did result in a statistically significant difference, similar to U.S. survey results. In summary, from the Korean survey results, I found support for my fifth and sixth hypotheses which suggested that the level of obligation would be significant for an emerging norm and suggested that the level of obligation would not be significant for an internalized norm.
Table 6: South Korea Survey Results (OLS)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Model 1</th>
<th>Model 2</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>High obligation</td>
<td>0.047**</td>
<td>0.044**</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(0.023)</td>
<td>(0.022)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Internalization</td>
<td>0.072***</td>
<td>0.053**</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(0.023)</td>
<td>(0.022)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>High obli. x Internalization</td>
<td>−0.071**</td>
<td>−0.045</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(0.032)</td>
<td>(0.031)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PID</td>
<td>0.006</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(0.007)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Knowledge</td>
<td>−0.008</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>(0.037)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Political involvement</td>
<td>0.015</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>(0.074)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cooperative internationalism</td>
<td>0.307***</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(0.066)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Military internationalism</td>
<td>0.086*</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(0.045)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Isolationism</td>
<td>0.133***</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(0.023)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Constant</td>
<td>0.437***</td>
<td>−0.020</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(0.016)</td>
<td>(0.063)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Observations</td>
<td>800</td>
<td>800</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>R²</td>
<td>0.013</td>
<td>0.128</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Adjusted R²</td>
<td>0.009</td>
<td>0.113</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Residual Std. Error</td>
<td>0.228 (df = 796)</td>
<td>0.215 (df = 785)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>F Statistic</td>
<td>3.470** (df = 3; 796)</td>
<td>8.246*** (df = 14; 785)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note: *p<0.1; **p<0.05; ***p<0.01

The control treatment condition has been dropped. The reference group is the emerging norm, low obligation treatment group. Note that significance levels are misleading without taking into account the interaction term and estimating the significance of relevant marginal effects. Not all pre-treatment covariates that were used in estimating the second model have been shown above. Additional pre-treatment covariates not shown above are age, gender, education, employment status, and income. PID represents individual respondents’ political leaning with 0 being liberal and 1 being conservative. The dependent variable has been converted to percentage points. 1 signifies 100 percentage points in favor of compliance.
VII. Discussion

The results from both countries provide evidence for my first four hypotheses which compare the active treatment conditions to the control treatment. If the state has made any level of commitment to an internalized norm, the public will be more likely to support compliance, compared to no information. When an emerging norm is coupled with a high level of state commitment, there is a statistically significant increase in public support for compliance, compared to no information. When the state has only made a low level of commitment to the same emerging norm, there is not a statistically significant increase in public support for compliance, again compared to no information.

When conditioning on an emerging norm, the level of obligation is significant in shifting public support for compliance in the U.S. and in South Korea. Human rights advocates and policymakers thus have an incentive to make strong legal commitments to emerging norms in both states. However when conditioning on an internalized norm, the level of obligation causes a statistically significant increase in public support for compliance only in the United States, not in South Korea. Korean policymakers have little incentive to legalize internalized norms for the purposes of eliciting increased public support because stronger legal commitments fail to create additional public support for compliance. American policymakers do have an incentive to legalize internalized norms as stronger legal commitments will engender even greater public support in the U.S.

I did not make any hypotheses about cross-national differences regarding the effect of legal obligation for internalized norms before the experiments were conducted. I did suggest that the lower bar for ratification may dilute the effect of international law in South Korea and that the common perception of international human rights law as “Western” could also mitigate its effect
on public opinion. From the data at hand, it is unclear which mechanism is causing laws of high and low obligation to have similar effects in shifting public opinion for an internalized norm in South Korea. It is possible that we see such results because South Koreans are more preoccupied with the level of norm internalization and are less legalistic in their approach to compliance. Their concern seems to be with international normative traditions and not necessarily with whether their state has made a strong legal commitment, thus the non-significant findings for the level of obligation when the norm is already internalized. Meanwhile, the U.S. seems to be more legalistic in their approach to compliance, yielding strong public support for compliance even when the norm is well-established. These results are in accordance with common presumptions about the more legalistic approach the U.S. takes to international law as well the challenges international law still faces in Asia as noted earlier. This is not to say that international law is wholly ineffective in Asia. Laws of high obligation did result in a statistically significant increase in public support compared to low obligation for emerging norms in South Korea, similar to the U.S.

Unfortunately, it is not possible, given the experimental design here to test the above conjectures about the cross-national difference more systematically. It is possible that a variety of other contextual circumstances could be driving the differences in the result. At the very least, this cross-national difference exemplifies the need to venture beyond the U.S. when studying public opinion and the need to adopt a more international approach to public opinion research. It would not be surprising if further studies demonstrate the limits of international legal obligation in different states due to varying conceptions of international law and of normative state behavior.

VIII. Causal Mechanisms

What are the causal mechanisms through which international law prompts public support for compliance? By altering vignettes to vary the level of state commitment to R2P, differences
in responses can be directly attributed to legal obligation. However, it is unclear as to how those variables are causing differences in responses. What are the mechanisms through which an established norm and/or state commitment to that norm encourage domestic support for compliance? Using mediation analysis and text analysis, I explore the causal mechanisms through which state commitment affects public support for compliance. Due to resource constraints, I only collected data on American respondents.

For mediation analysis, I considered four potential mediators: international oversight, elite cue, morality, and reputation. The motivation behind each of the mediators is as follows. First, for the international oversight mediator, when respondents are told that the state has made a commitment to R2P, they could infer that there is some sort of delegated body enforcing or monitoring state behavior in regards to R2P. That is, from a respondent’s perspective, the treatment could cause one to presume the existence of a delegated body meting out external punishment for noncompliance with R2P and thereby induce one’s support for compliance with R2P. Meanwhile respondents in the control group who are never told of any type of state commitment to R2P would not presume the existence of such an international organization and thus be less willing to comply with R2P. Second, respondents may presume that there is widespread consensus among the domestic political elite regarding R2P when they read that the state has made a commitment, strong or weak, to R2P. This could be especially true for respondents who are told that the state has made a strong commitment in the form of codified international law, which requires high levels of consensus among elected officials to be ratified. The presumed high level of elite consensus

---

55 The latter two mediators have been tested by Chilton (2014) in a different setting. Chilton also tests a third mediator, which I also considered. I termed this mediator the “loss aversion” mediator. This mediator tests whether international law creates an expectation for compliance and causes respondents to crave the promised human rights norm even more when faced with possible noncompliance. After being told of state commitment to R2P and the possibility of noncompliance or a “loss” to the right they were promised, respondents may experience an expectation gap that would otherwise not exist had the international law never existed. Consequently, respondents in the treatment groups could demand the compliance with the norm even more than they otherwise would and prioritize the need to conform to international standards. This sudden demand for compliance may lead respondents to support R2P more than those in the control group who were never promised state compliance with R2P to begin with. The results are inconclusive and have been moved to the Appendix for clarity.
signaled by international law could then be influencing the public’s support for compliance along
the lines of elite cue theory.\footnote{Zaller (1992); Berinsky (2009)}

Third, the morality mediator tests whether the treatment encourages compliance by increasing
the likelihood that the public views a particular policy as immoral as a result of the treatment
conditions. In this case, I ask respondents whether failing to respond to mass atrocities is immoral.
After being informed of an international legal norm and state commitment to that norm, it could
be the case that respondents are more likely to view nonintervention as immoral. There are two
possibilities for why a respondent may view the failure to act as immoral. One is that international
law shapes how respondents evaluate the morality of inaction. That is, state commitment could
shape how people gauge the morality associated with simply letting people suffer. Those who
do not receive the active treatments may not view letting people suffer to be immoral, at least
not immoral to the extent of justifying costly compliance. Those who do receive the active
treatments may view letting people suffer to be immoral, enough to justify costly compliance. The
shift in moral judgment—caused by the existence of state commitment—may consequently shape
one’s willingness to support compliance. Put differently, people may be using state commitment
to international law as a guide for what is moral and immoral, and supporting or opposing
compliance accordingly. The other reason respondents may consider noncompliance immoral is
the fact that the state has made a commitment and it is immoral to “lie” or “back out.” In the latter
case, the immorality of inaction in the midst of human suffering does not factor in. It is a matter of
keeping one’s promises. Unfortunately, it is not possible to disentangle the two types of morality
in this setting. That is, it is impossible to tell whether the respondent considers inaction immoral
for either or both reasons. Readers should thus consider the possibility that both mechanisms are
encapsulated by the morality mediator.
Finally, the reputation mediator tests whether different levels of commitment to an international norm and different levels of norm internalization at the state-level encourage compliance because the public values honoring commitments. Once respondents are made aware of a state commitment to R2P, they may find it important to honor that commitment because they fear that inaction will create a reputation for noncompliance, which will in turn cause other states to become hesitant of making future agreements with the U.S. Respondents in the active treatment groups could be more likely to think that America’s reputation as a country that keeps its international commitments would be hurt and thereby support compliance more than the control group who were not told of any level of state commitment to R2P. Like the morality mediator, it is possible that respondents care about reputation for a second, intrinsic reason. Developing a reputation for noncompliance may be perceived as inherently bad, regardless of the material costs. As before, it is impossible to tell whether a respondent seeks to avoid reputation costs for instrumental or intrinsic purposes. Readers should thus consider the possibility that both motivations are encapsulated by the reputation mediator.

The mediators, unlike the treatment, were not experimentally varied. Instead I asked four mediator questions to all treatment and control groups, which are reproduced below. The four questions were asked in random order to prevent ordering effects.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>International oversight: How likely is it that there is an international oversight committee that monitors how countries respond to mass atrocities?</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>• Very likely</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Likely</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Neither likely nor unlikely</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Unlikely</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Very unlikely</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Elite cue: How likely is it that there is strong support among elected officials on taking military action in response to mass atrocities?</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>• Very likely</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Likely</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Based on the above conjectures, I make the following hypotheses.

**H1:** State commitment to R2P will increase public support by encouraging respondents to believe that an international organization is monitoring the government’s compliance with R2P.

**H2:** State commitment to R2P will increase public support by encouraging respondents to believe that elites support compliance with R2P.

**H3:** State commitment to R2P will increase public support by encouraging respondents to believe noncompliance with R2P is immoral.

**H4:** State commitment to R2P will increase public support by encouraging respondents to believe that noncompliance with R2P will damage America’s reputation.

Drawing from Kosuke Imai and his co-authors’ method, I used the following steps for mediation analysis. First, I subset respondents by treatment condition. Second, I estimated the effect of each treatment on each mediator within sub-samples. Third, I estimated the effect of each treatment on the outcome.
mediator on the dependent variable, support for compliance with R2P. Fourth, I estimated the average causal mediation effect [ACME] using data from the first three steps, the comparison being each active treatment group versus the control group. Since there are four active treatment groups and one control group, I made four dichotomous comparisons—each treatment group compared to the control group. This process obtained predicted values for the mediator and the dependent variable by fitting parametric models to the observed data and then estimating the average effect by iterating the process. Because the mediators were not randomly assigned and instead observationally recorded by asking respondents the four mediator questions, mediation analysis was vulnerable to the same inferential threats of observational data. Identifying the average causal mediation effects required the sequential ignorability assumption that assignments to the treatment and to the mediators were as-if random. Although the treatment was randomly assigned, the mediators were not. In order to meet the ignorability assumption, I emulated as-if random assignment by including the set of covariates when estimating the effect of the mediators on the dependent variable.

The following figures summarize the resulting estimates from mediation analysis. Across all treatments, the first two mediators, international oversight and elite cue were not statistically significant. Thus, the differences in responses between the control group and each treatment group cannot be attributed to differing beliefs about international oversight or elite cue.

I first examine the mechanisms through which laws of high obligation have an effect when the norm is internalized. As the following figure shows, when R2P was framed as an internalized norm and when the state made a high level of commitment, the morality mediator and the reputation mediator both had statistically significant results. After controlling for all covariates,

58 Imai et al. (2011, 770)
59 Tomz and Weeks (2013)
60 The Appendix includes sensitivity analyses for all of the following mediation analyses.
the average treatment effect for a high level of commitment to an internalized norm was 20.09 percentage points. Mediation analysis suggests that 3.92 percentage points were mediated by concerns about morality, and 4.91 percentage points were mediated by concerns about reputation. As alluded to before, the 3.92 percentage points mediated by the morality mediator include respondents who believed that inaction was immoral because doing nothing in the face of mass atrocities was immoral and also those who believed that not keeping a commitment would be “lying,” an immoral act in and of itself. Similarly, the 4.91 percentage points mediated by the reputation mediator include respondents who were concerned about reputation costs for instrumental reasons and for intrinsic reasons.

In contrast, when the state made a low level of commitment, I failed to find a treatment effect through any of the four hypothesized mediators. After controlling for all covariates, the average treatment effect for a low level of commitment to an internalized norm was a statistically significant 10.84 percentage points. Mediation analysis suggests the treatment effect was not mediated by the above mediators. Unlike high levels of commitment, a low level of commitment failed to induce a sense of morality or stake the reputation of the state. This suggests that the public does not consider noncompliance with R2P to be immoral when the state has made a weak commitment to the norm. To be clear, even if the norm is internalized, if the state has not made a high level of commitment, the American public will not consider noncompliance immoral. This is a somewhat surprising finding given that the norm was assumed to be fully internalized at the state-level in this treatment condition. This suggests that norm internalization at the state-level does not shift individual-level perceptions of morality. It offers preliminary evidence that segments of the U.S. public may prefer to costlessly remain uncommitted to international legal norms by refusing to make a strong commitment to internalized norms and thereby consider themselves relieved of any moral duty. The public also does not feel that the reputation of the state is at stake
for low levels of obligation. This, however, is somewhat less surprising because the reputation of the state may not be engaged unless the state makes a strong commitment to comply with the norm. In sum, noncompliance with R2P, even if it is an internalized legal norm, is not considered to be immoral as long as the government has not made a strong commitment to abide by it.

Further analysis comparing the two active treatment conditions in which R2P was framed as internalized, rather than each active treatment compared with the control condition, yielded consistent findings. As the following figure shows, when respondents are informed that the state has made a strong commitment to R2P through laws of high obligation, as opposed to low obligation, they are more likely to support compliance due to the morality mediator and the reputation mediator. Recall that in the U.S. legal obligation had an additional effect even when the norm was internalized. In short, mediation analysis reveals that the mechanisms through which
stronger legal obligations have an effect are morality and reputation.\textsuperscript{61}

Figure 5: ACME; Internalized, Soft Law Treatment VS Internalized, Hard Law Treatment

\begin{figure}[h]
\centering
\includegraphics[width=0.5\textwidth]{fig5.png}
\caption{ACME; Internalized, Soft Law Treatment VS Internalized, Hard Law Treatment}
\end{figure}

Meanwhile, when R2P was framed as an emerging norm and when the state made a high level of commitment, I found a similar result in which morality and reputation were both statistically significant mediators. This suggests that laws of high obligation cause differences in responses through the same mediators regardless of whether the norm is emerging or internalized. After controlling for all covariates, the average treatment effect for a high level of commitment to an emerging norm was 17.09 percentage points. Mediation analysis suggests that 4.17 percentage points were mediated by concerns about morality and 5.43 percentage points were mediated by concerns about reputation. As was the case with internalized norms, a high level of obligation to an emerging norm causes the public to view noncompliance as immoral and feel that the reputation of the country is at stake, thereby inducing support for compliance. In contrast, a

\textsuperscript{61}It is possible that the two mediators would not be significant for an internalized norm in South Korea where high obligation did not have larger effect on public opinion than low obligation. Unfortunately, the Korean survey did not include mediator questions due to resource constraints.
low level of obligation to an emerging norm fails to do either. A low level of obligation to an emerging norm fails to have a statistically significant effect by causing the public to think that noncompliance with R2P is immoral. The public will also not believe that the reputation of the state is at stake when the state has only made a low level of commitment. This analysis suggests that high legal obligation has an effect on compliance through the same mediators regardless of whether the norm is internalized or emerging.

Figure 6: ACME; Control VS Emerging Norm Treatment Conditions

As before, I conducted further analysis comparing the two active treatment conditions in which R2P was framed as emerging, rather than each active treatment compared with the control treatment. The analysis yielded consistent findings. As the following figure shows, when respondents are informed that the state has made a strong commitment to R2P through laws of high obligation, as opposed to low obligation, they are more likely to support compliance due to the morality mediator and the reputation mediator.
To summarize, mediation analyses suggests that regardless of the level of norm internalization, high legal obligation fosters public support for compliance by changing perceptions of morality and by tying the reputation of the state to compliance. Respondents will view noncompliance negatively due concerns over morality and reputational consequences, and they will subsequently support compliance due to such factors. On the other hand, if the state has made a low level of commitment, regardless of the norm’s life cycle, international law will not have an effect on public support for compliance through the hypothesized mediators. This finding was surprising because a low level commitment even to an internalized norm failed elicit a treatment effect through the morality mediator. This result suggests that some Americans may prefer to be relieved of any moral duty by skirting strong commitments to abide by internalized human rights norms.

In order to explore causal mechanisms further, I also asked open-ended questions to all of the American respondents about why they chose to support or oppose military involvement in
order to prevent further civilian deaths. Using these responses, I used new methodological tools developed by Molly Roberts and her co-authors. In short, they analyze open-ended texts by first cataloging common words (also referred to as “topics”) mentioned in the responses and linking the propensity to mention the common words across the different treatment conditions. This analysis is meant to supplement above findings regarding causal mechanisms using mediation analysis. In that sense, one may treat the following text analysis of open-ended responses as a plausibility probe. However, text analysis also provides a unique advantage over mediation analysis. Mediator questions may prime respondents to focus on potential mediators mentioned in the wording of the questions and to justify their rationale along those lines post-treatment. In contrast, by asking open-ended responses, I allow respondents to give their rationale without priming their responses beforehand. It is hoped that this use of text analysis, which automates the analysis of large quantities of text data, will demonstrate new avenues of research for future public opinion surveys.

The specific procedure for text analysis is as follows. First, I asked respondents to explain their decision in a few sentences. Second, I subset the responses by each treatment group and compared the two treatment groups with the same level of norm internalization. Because there are four active treatment groups, there are two dichotomous comparisons in total: one comparing varying legal obligations to an internalized norm and the other comparing varying legal obligations to an emerging norm. Relying on the stm package in R developed by Roberts and her co-authors, I used an unsupervised machine learning technique that incorporated the treatment condition of individual respondents and pre-treatment covariates. Using a structural topic model, I uncovered common “topics,” that occurred in multiple explanations and determined

---

62 Roberts et al. (2014)
63 I also conducted dichotomous comparisons of each active treatment group to the control condition. The four resulting comparisons are included in the Appendix.
64 Roberts, Stewart and Tingley (2014)
which treatment condition was more likely to trigger certain “topics” in the responses. Although I incorporated all of the pre-treatment covariates, excluding the pre-treatment covariates and modeling the structural topic model on only the treatment conditions resulted in similar findings. Due to the constraints of unsupervised machine learning, the number of topics had to be specified beforehand. To minimize the possibility of researcher-induced bias in the specification of the number of topics, I used the manyTopics package in R that processed multiple outputs from a structural topic model and selected the pareto dominant run of the model in terms of exclusivity and semantic coherence.

I focus on several quantities of interest from text analysis which are summarized in the following two figures, one figure that examines the mechanisms through which varying levels of legal obligation has an effect when the norm is internalized and another figure for when the norm is emerging. In each figure, I first report the prevalence of different topics (i.e. corpus proportions) in the two treatment groups being compared, the low obligation treatment group and the high obligation treatment group. That is, I examine which causal mechanism people most commonly provide across the treatment conditions when supporting or opposing compliance. For topics that make semantic sense, I include a topic label in the figures below. Topics that have little semantic meaning are left unlabeled. Second, I report the prevalence of certain topics after conditioning on the level of norm internalization. That is, I note whether high obligation is more likely to trigger a particular rationale to justify a respondent’s stance than the low obligation treatment, for each level of norm internalization. Finally, I report sample responses from select topics to further illustrate the causal mechanism a particular topic represents.

The figure below is text analysis of open-ended responses provided by the low obligation treatment group and the high obligation treatment group for an internalized norm. Recall that in the U.S. high legal obligation had an additional effect over low obligation even when the
norm was internalized. The following analysis reveals the mechanism through which stronger legal obligation has an effect when the norm is internalized. Topics 1, 3, and 4 did not have a useful semantic meaning. Topic 2, on the other hand, described the reputation mediator. As the top-right panel of the figure shows, respondents in the high obligation treatment group were more likely than the low obligation treatment group to mention reputation as a reason for their stance. The reputation mediator was also shown to be statistically significant in the analogous mediation analysis. Therefore greater support for compliance with R2P in the high obligation treatment group can be attributed to the reputation mediator. A state’s high level of obligation to an internalized norm is likely to trigger a sense of reputational stake thus resulting in greater support for compliance with R2P. The example texts reproduced in the bottom panels also demonstrate the rationale behind the reputation mediator in the respondents’ own words.

One divergence from the analogous mediation analysis earlier is the fact that the text analysis was unable to find the morality mediator, which warrants further discussion below.

---

65 Topic 3 may be of interest to the reader given its strong statistical significance. It contained reasoning somewhat resembling isolationist sentiments. I believe this sentiment is equally felt across all respondents, but the high obligation treatment overrides such sentiments while the low obligation treatment allows such sentiments to be expressed. Topic 3 was described as lacking a useful meaning in the text above for clarity, especially since such sentiments are not a causal mechanism through which the control treatment is having an effect but rather an expression of underlying attitudes.
The next figure is text analysis of open-ended responses provided by the low obligation treatment group and the high obligation treatment group for an emerging norm. Recall that legal obligation had a statistically significant effect when the norm was emerging in both the U.S.
and South Korea. The following analysis reveals the mechanism through which stronger legal obligation is having an effect when the norm is emerging in the U.S. Topics 1, 3, and 4 did not have a useful semantic meaning. Topic 2, on the other hand, described the reputation mediator. As the top-right panel of the figure shows, respondents in the high obligation treatment group were more likely than the low obligation treatment group to mention reputation as a reason for their stance. The reputation mediator was also shown to be statistically significant in the analogous mediation analysis earlier. One can therefore attribute the greater support for compliance with R2P in the high obligation treatment group to the reputation mediator once again. A state’s high level of obligation to an emerging norm is likely to trigger a sense of reputational stake thus resulting in greater support for compliance with R2P. The example texts reproduced in the bottom panels also demonstrate the rationale behind the reputation mediator in the respondents’ own words.

66 Topic 4 may be of interest to the reader given its strong statistical significance. As in the text analysis immediately before involving the internalized norm treatment groups, Topic 4 contained reasoning somewhat resembling isolationist sentiments. Again, I believe this sentiment is equally felt across all respondents, but the high obligation treatment overrides such sentiments while the low obligation treatment allows such sentiments to be expressed. Topic 4 was described as lacking a useful meaning in the text above for clarity, especially since such sentiments are not a causal mechanism through which the control treatment is having an effect but rather an expression of underlying attitudes.
For the most part, text analysis confirms my findings from mediation analysis. Text analysis demonstrates that a strong level of commitment to a human rights norm will increase public support for compliance with that norm through the reputation mediator, regardless of the level
of norm internalization. However, text analysis did not reveal the morality mediator, which was found to be a consistently significant mechanism in mediation analyses. This may be due to the fact that often times, respondents have several reasons for their stance, but when answering open-ended questions they economize their responses and verbalize only one of their potentially many reasons. As such, for each respondent, text analysis can assign only one of several possible mediators that a particular respondent chooses to provide. In contrast, mediation analysis allows researchers insight into secondary, or equally important but unmentioned, mediators that drive each respondent’s support or opposition to compliance with R2P. In the context of this study, it is possible that text analysis yielded only the reputation mediator because respondents economized by focusing on reputational consequences even though stronger legal obligations also had an effect by shifting their moral perspective on the issue. Despite these limitations and despite the potential for such discrepancies, when exploring causal mechanisms I believe survey experiments should take both methods into account if possible such that each method can complement the other.

IX. Conclusion

Does state commitment to an international human rights norm shift public support for compliance with that norm? This question lies at the foundation of the domestic compliance mechanism. Unfortunately, previous experimental studies on public opinion towards international law have resulted in mixed findings. This study incorporates the life cycle of norms to arrive at a more nuanced understanding of when and how state commitment to international human rights norms, specifically R2P, sways public support for compliance. By conducting surveys in the United States, I find that when R2P is framed as an internalized norm, the level of commitment does not matter and the simple fact that R2P is established is sufficient to cause a shift in American public
support for compliance, relative to no information. There is, however, even greater public support when the state makes a strong level of commitment to R2P as opposed to a weak commitment. When R2P is framed as an emerging norm, the level of commitment by the state is crucial in shifting public support. A low commitment to an emerging norm will fail to elicit public support for compliance. The American public is more likely to support compliance with R2P as an emerging norm when the state makes a strong commitment to comply with R2P as opposed to a weak commitment. I find similar results in Korea, with the exception that when R2P is internalized, stronger legal commitments are largely superfluous.

As R2P stands at a crossroads, the study explored the impact that different frames of R2P could have in distinct areas of the world. The manner in which policymakers and norm entrepreneurs present R2P can have a profound influence on how the public perceives the legal norm and whether constituents are willing to support state compliance with R2P. Furthermore, whether the U.S. or South Korea makes a strong commitment to prevent mass atrocities matters in shaping the minds of their respective public, especially if the public perceives R2P to be an emerging norm. To elicit support from those who consider R2P to be emerging rather than established, policymakers from both countries may benefit from convincing the state to make a high level of commitment to the norm. Meanwhile, for an American policymaker hoping to elicit greater public support for compliance with R2P from segments of the populace that already consider the norm to be internalized, she still benefits from securing a stronger legal commitment relative to a weaker commitment. This does not hold true for Korean policymakers whose constituents are not more likely to be moved by a stronger state commitment to what they already perceive to be an established norm. If we can assume that other norms are similar to R2P in this regard, policymakers hoping for greater public support for compliance should push for legalization, especially when the norm is emerging. When the norm is already established, only American
policymakers may see the advantage of legalization in terms of eliciting greater public support for compliance. Of course, there is an important caveat; legalizing norms that are emerging may be met with more resistance than norms that are established and thus require greater political capital. Whether the life cycle of norms affect the likelihood of legalization—and the serially causal relationship between norm life cycles and legalization—offer promising paths for future research.

The causal mechanisms through which state commitment has an effect on public support should be emphasized as well. Using mediation analysis and text analysis, I show that American respondents are more likely to believe that the reputation of the state is at stake when a strong commitment has been made to abide by R2P. Mediation analysis reveals that when the state has made a strong commitment to R2P, American respondents are more likely to also view noncompliance with R2P as immoral, adding a dimension of moral obligation behind the norm. Meanwhile, if the state has not made a hard commitment and has simply made a soft commitment to R2P, the American public is less likely to feel a sense of moral obligation to observe R2P, and the public is less likely to believe that the reputation of the state is at stake.

In closing, the domestic compliance mechanism seems to be alive and well. International legal commitments can lead to greater compliance by generating significant public support whenever the state makes a strong commitment to the norm, and especially for an emerging norm. One should not expect greater compliance—at least not through the domestic compliance mechanism—for a weak commitment to an emerging norm. Future research on the domestic compliance mechanism should take into account the life cycle of the underlying norms and the region of the world when attempting to understand whether international legal commitments will inspire public support for compliance.
REFERENCES


Statute of the International Court of Justice. 1946. URL: http://www.icj-cij.org/documents/?p1=4&p2=2


